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## Clerk outs rule-dodging pols

Macomb Co. official collects fines, reports after posting offenders of election code on Web.

Steve Pardo / The Detroit News

**MACOMB COUNTY** -- There's nothing like a little public scrutiny to ensure those running for office follow election protocol.

Last week, Macomb County Clerk Carmella Sabaugh -- frustrated with candidates who failed to pay fines stemming from late reports on campaign contributions -- started posting offenders' names on the clerk's Web site. She's the first clerk in the state to do so.

"It's working great," Sabaugh said. "Candidates know now the public is watching. And that's a good thing."

Results bear her out. Macomb County candidates running in the Aug. 8 primary set a record with their nearly flawless obedience to campaign election stipulations. Out of the 67 candidate committees required to file reports, only two had not done so as of Monday.

Past elections frequently saw the number of people filing their campaign contribution reports late hit double-digit figures. Penalties start at \$25 a day and increase daily. There are some people currently on the list who owe as much as \$3,000 from multiple campaign reports. Those fines stem from late fees associated with past elections.

"In the big scheme of things, this is a relatively small thing but it's a positive thing," said Rich Robinson, director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, a Lansing-based political watchdog organization. "There are some huge races going on in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. It's a bit of good news in a very dark world."

Sabaugh's office has collected more than \$2,000 since her office sent out letters last month notifying those who owe that their names would be on the county's Web site at [campaignfinance.macombcountymi.gov](http://campaignfinance.macombcountymi.gov).

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